



BILLING CODE: 3720-58

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Intent to Prepare an Integrated Feasibility/Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Tinian Harbor Modifications Project, Island of Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), DoD.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the section 102(2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Municipality of Tinian (Municipality)/Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) gives notice that an Integrated Feasibility/Environmental Impact Statement (F/EIS) is being prepared for the Proposed Tinian Harbor Modifications Project, Island of Tinian, CNMI. This project is authorized under section 209 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1962 (Public Law 87-874) and will consider the implementation of navigation improvements at Tinian Harbor.

DATES: In order to be considered in the Draft F/EIS, comments and suggestions should be received within 30 days after the last public scoping meeting. Two public scoping meetings will be held in Saipan and Tinian in mid/late July 2016. A separate notice will be published for meeting times and places.

ADDRESSES: Mail written comments concerning this notice to: Mr. Milton Yoshimoto, Project Manager, Civil and Public Works Branch, Honolulu District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Civil and Public Works Branch, Bldg 230, Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858. Comment letters should include the commenter's physical mailing address and the project title in the subject line.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Milton Yoshimoto, Civil and Public Works Branch, Honolulu District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bldg 230, Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858, (808) 835-4034, E-mail: milton.t.yoshimoto@usace.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with NEPA, the Corps intends to prepare an F/EIS report. The primary Federal actions under consideration are: 1) navigation improvement measures that expand the turning basin; 2) surge reduction measures by constructing protective structures at both harbors; and 3) dredging harbor sediments to allow larger vessels access to the harbor. The F/EIS reports shall meet the requirements of NEPA, including all applicable federal regulations implementing those statutes.

Evaluation will examine the costs and benefits of this project, as well as the environmental impacts of modifying the maintained dimensions of the existing harbor. The purpose of this effort is to conduct a study to assess the technical, environmental and economic feasibility in the implementation of navigation improvement at Tinian Harbor.

Project Site and Background Information: Tinian Harbor is the sole commercial harbor servicing the island of Tinian, CNMI and is owned and maintained by the CPA. Due to its isolation, the harbor is extremely important for the continual flow and transit of goods and materials for the small island community. The CNMI is threatened annually by typhoons and tropical storms which has resulted in the deterioration of the protective breakwater and harbor facilities. Failure of the breakwater would result in complete closure of the harbor, requiring costly air transport as the only remaining option to deliver essential commodities to the island. The project will focus on the repair/reconfiguration of the breakwater and an incremental analysis of the harbor depth to assure safe and efficient operation of commercial vessels.

Proposed Action(s): The study reports will assess the technical, environmental and economic feasibility in the implementation of navigation improvement. These include:

1) navigation improvement measures that expand the federal turning basin; 2) surge reduction measures by constructing protective structures; and 3) expand and deepen the harbor basin and entrance channel to accommodate larger vessels by dredging.

Issues: Potentially significant issues associated with the project may include: aesthetics/visual impacts, air quality emissions, biological resource impacts, environmental justice, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, traffic and transportation, and cumulative impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Scoping Process: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking participation and input of all interested federal, state, and local agencies, Native American groups, and other concerned private organizations or individuals on the scope of the F/EIS through this public notice. The purpose of the public scoping meeting is to solicit comments regarding the potential impacts, environmental issues, and alternatives associated with the proposed action to be considered in the study report. The meeting place, date, and time will be advertised in advance in local newspapers, and meeting announcement letters will be sent to interested parties. The draft F/EIS is expected to be available for public review and comment in the summer of 2017 and a public meeting will be held after its publication.

Dated: July 1, 2016.

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